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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/27/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [KPKO](#) [RU](#) [GG](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL: SEEKING INPUT ON U.S. PLANS IN GEORGIA

REF: A. STATE 90978  
[B](#). STATE 90980  
[C](#). TEL AVIV 1826  
[D](#). STATE 91894

Classified By: Political Counselor Marc Sievers, reasons 1.4 (b),(d)

[1](#). (C) Summary: MFA officials are seeking input on U.S. plans on the ground in Georgia prior to their interagency examination of a resumption of Israeli military assistance to Georgia. At the same time, Israel is reviewing -- and has approved several -- requests from Tbilisi for military assistance on a case-by-case basis. Regarding Moscow's recognition of South Ossetian and Abkhazian independence, the GOI stands by earlier statements made during the height of the conflict affirming Georgia's territorial integrity and calling for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Emboffs discussed these issues with GOI officials on August 26 and 27. End summary.

[2](#). (C) Pol Couns discussed refs A-B with MFA North America Department Director Dan Arbelle on August 26. Arbelle declined to comment on the political ramifications of Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. He noted, however, that Israel's DCM in Washington Jeremy Issacharoff had spoken to DAS David Hale on Georgia by phone August 26. According to Arbelle, Issacharoff suggested to Hale that it would be useful for the Israelis to have a better sense of what the United States is planning on the ground in Georgia before determining next steps on resuming Israeli military assistance to Georgia. Arbelle understood that DAS Hale "took the point," and promised Issacharoff a response as soon as possible.

[3](#). (S) Arbelle also noted that the Israeli interagency meeting to discuss Georgia (as reported ref C) had been postponed due to illnesses and travel plans of several senior officials -- including MOD Political-Military Director Amos Gilad. Now that these officials were back in the office, the MFA and MOD planned to meet in the near future to discuss Israel's strategic support policy to Georgia. Arbelle emphasized that U.S. input regarding its plans on the ground in Georgia would be helpful in determining Israel's next steps.

[4](#). (C) Polmiloff discussed ref D points with MFA Director of Export Controls Roey Gilad on August 27. Gilad noted that the GOI had expressed "loudly and clearly" during the height of the conflict that it considers South Ossetia and Abkhazia to be part of Georgia. He said the GOI therefore rejects Russian recognition of independence, and continues to believe that any conflict in the region should be resolved in a peaceful manner. Gilad said the GOI will carefully examine ref D points, but suspected such points would receive "an open reception" in Israel.

[5](#). (S) Turning to military assistance, Gilad confirmed that the MOD/MFA meeting to review its security assistance support

to Georgia had been postponed until the week of September 1. Gilad said that the MOD and MFA are "in constant contact" as they review Georgian requests for military assistance on a now case-by-case basis. He noted that the GOI had received approximately six requests from Tbilisi since the end of the conflict, and has approved several -- including a request for sophisticated unmanned aerial vehicle-mounted cameras. While not at liberty to discuss further cases, he noted that a specific request made directly from the Israeli Ambassador in Tbilisi would likely "be given the greenlight."

16. (C) Gilad suggested that the GOI wants to "return to business as usual" with Georgia as soon as possible, and is trying to accommodate Georgian military assistance requests. The question, he added, was "how soon is soon?" He said MFA Director General Abramovich had requested an internal MFA review of resuming military assistance to Georgia following an August 25 conversation with A/S Welch and DAPNSA Abrams on the margins of the Secretary's visit. He echoed Arbell's point that any update the USG could provide to Israel regarding its military assistance plans for Georgia would help frame Israel's interagency review next week.

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